

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-09 EUR-12 IO-13
SSM-05 SIG-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 H-02 /101 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:MKBERRY:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. CARTER (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MR. COLLUMS
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY

-----281126Z 025815 /21

R 280110Z APR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
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AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS STATE 095674

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - APRIL 27

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS
BRIEFING APRIL 27, 1977:

AT SECRETARY VANCE'S SUGGESTION, HE AND ISRAELI FOREIGN
MINISTER ALLON WILL MEET AT A WORKING LUNCH IN LONDON ON
MAY 11TH. THIS WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY, AS PART OF OUR
CONTINUING CONTACTS WITH THE PARTIES, FOR A GENERAL EXCHANGE
OF VIEWS WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ON THE CURRENT STATUS
OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS. IT WILL ALSO GIVE THE SEC-
RETARY AN OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM MR. ALLON OF THE OUTCOME
OF THE DISCUSSIONS HELD SO FAR BY PRESIDENT CARTER WITH
VARIOUS MIDDLE EAST LEADERS.

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Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT NOW THINK AFTER THIS LATEST
ROUND OF TALKS THAT A GENEVA CONFERENCE IS GOING TO BE
POSSIBLE THIS YEAR?

A. WELL, OF COURSE, WE HAVEN'T CONCLUDED OUR ROUND OF
TALKS, AS YOU DESCRIBE THEM. WE ARE STILL EXTREMELY IN-
TERESTED IN ONE, AND ARE INTERESTED IN THE VIEWS OF THE
POSSIBLE PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR A SETTLEMENT
IN THE MIDDLE EAST. BUT I WOULD SAY AT THIS POINT THERE'S
NO CHANGE IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S FEELING ABOUT THE
GENEVA CONFERENCE.

I THINK A FULL ASSESSMENT WILL JUST HAVE TO AWAIT THE
CONCLUSION OF THE ROUND OF TALKS THAT WE'VE INITIATED
OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS.

Q. WELL, WHEN I SAID "ROUND," I MEANT AFTER THE HUSSEIN
TALKS.

A. "AFTER THE HUSSEIN TALKS" OBVIOUSLY TIES IN WITH
SOMETHING ELSE. AT THIS MOMENT, WHICH HAS NO DEFINITION
OTHER THAN TO SAY I CAN ONLY SPEAK FROM THIS MOMENT, THE
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS IN NO WAY BACKING AWAY FROM
ITS STRONG COMMITMENT TO A MAJOR EFFORT TO RECONVENE

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN THE LATTER HALF OF THIS YEAR.
THE PRESIDENT'S MEETINGS WITH ALL OF THE MIDDLE EAST
LEADERS HAVE UNDERLINED OUR DETERMINATION ON THIS SCORE.

Q. YOU SPEAK OF "COMMITMENT," BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR HOPES,
WHICH IS VERY DIFFERENT?

A. WELL, "COMMITMENT" MEANS THAT WE ARE AIMING TOWARD
AN OBJECTIVE WHICH WE HOPE WILL TAKE PLACE.

Q. DO YOU NOW HAVE A LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN MIND FOR
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE?
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A. NO, I DON'T HAVE A LIST TO OFFER AT THIS POINT. I
THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THE PEOPLE WE'VE BEEN TALKING TO ARE
CLEARLY PARTIES TO A SOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q. YOU DON'T HAVE A LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN MIND?

A. WELL, YES. I HAVE THE LIST WHO ARE ALREADY PARTY TO
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, AND WHO WOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY REC-
ONVENED. I'M NOT GOING TO GO BEYOND THAT.

Q. THOSE OF US WHO FOLLOW THIS HAVE NOTICED IN THE LAST
COUPLE OF DAYS WHAT WE THINK IS A CHANGE, AT LEAST, IN
EMPHASIS -- THAT NOW THE EMPHASIS SEEMS TO BE TURNING
FROM A CONFERENCE AT THE END OF THE YEAR TO SUBSTANTIAL

PROGRESS BEFORE A CONFERENCE CAN BE CALLED.

WOULD THE STATE DEPARTMENT BE TERRIBLY UPSET IF THE CON-
FERENCE DIDN'T OCCUR IN THE LATTER HALF OF 1977 AND, IN
FACT, WAS PUT OFF UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF 1978?

A. I GUESS I HAVE TO STICK WITH WHAT I SAID -- THAT WE
ARE STRONGLY COMMITTED TO MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT TO RECON-
VENE THE CONFERENCE IN THE LATTER HALF OF THIS YEAR. I
MEAN I MIGHT AS WELL GET RIGHT DOWN TO IT. I SUPPOSE
THIS REEVALUATION OR THIS REINTERPRETATION THAT'S GOING ON
HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS YESTERDAY,
SINCE YOU JUST USED THE PHRASE THAT CAME RIGHT OUT OF HIS
PRESS CONFERENCE.

I THINK IT'S WORTH NOTING THAT FOLLOWING THE PHRASE WHICH
WENT: "UNLESS WE SEE SOME STRONG POSSIBILITY FOR SUBSTAN-
TIAL ACHIEVEMENTS BEFORE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, THEN I THINK
IT WOULD BE BETTER NOT TO HAVE IT," THE PRESIDENT SAID.

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HE WENT ON TO SAY: "SO FAR THOUGH, I HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED"
-- A PHRASE WHICH GOT LOST SOMEWHERE IN THE TRANSLATION.

HE WAS SOUNDING A CAUTIONARY NOTE -- OR, TO PUT IT ANOTHER
WAY, WAS STATING THE OBVIOUS -- BUT WENT RIGHT FORWARD
FROM THERE TO SAY THAT UP TO NOW HE'S ENCOURAGED.

Q. I DON'T ARGUE WITH YOU, BUT I DON'T THINK IT GOT LOST
IN THE TRANSLATION. KING HUSSEIN SAID LATER: THE PROBLEM
IS NOT ONE OF ORGANIZING A METHOD TO GET TO GENEVA BUT
OF WORKING OUT THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED
THERE" -- SO THAT IT SEEMS THAT WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT IS
THAT CART HAS KIND OF BEEN PUT IN FRONT OF THE HORSE.
PREVIOUSLY WE'VE BEEN TALKING A LOT ABOUT GETTING A GENEVA
CONFERENCE AND NOW THERE SEEMS TO BE MORE TALK ABOUT GET-
TING PROBLEMS SOLVED BEFORE A GENEVA CONFERENCE AND YOU'RE
TELLING US THAT WE'RE NOT LISTENING RIGHT, IS THAT CORRECT?

A. NO. I'M TELLING YOU THAT TO SUGGEST THAT WE ARE SAYING
THE PROBLEMS LOOK INSURMOUNTABLE AND, THEREFORE, A GENEVA
CONFERENCE IS NOT LIKELY THIS YEAR WOULD BE A WRONG ANAL-
YSIS. AGAIN, AS THE PRESIDENT SAID, GOING ALONG THE SAME
LINE OF WHAT YOU'RE ASKING ME, THAT AFTER -- AND THE PRO-
CESS ISN'T THROUGH -- WE'VE TALKED TO ALL THE LEADERS AND
THIS PROCESS WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN MAY,
"THEN WE'LL CONSOLIDATE," HE SAID, "AN ANALYSIS OF THE
REMAINING PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE ANSWERS AND SECRETARY

VANCE WOULD GO BACK TO THE MIDDLE EAST" -- AS, INDEED,
MANY OF YOU HAD ANTICIPATED IN ANY CASE, TO TRY TO WORK
THEM THROUGH. BUT THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE TO BE OVERCOME
ARE THE ONES WE'VE ALWAYS DISCUSSED RIGHT ALONG -- WHICH
WOULD PRECEDE THE RECONVENING OF A GENEVA CONFERENCE, AND
I DON'T THINK THAT'S NEW.

Q. WOULD YOU SAY NOW THAT THE TIMETABLE WHICH YOU SET OUT
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AT THE BEGINNING OF THE INITIATIVE IS RIGHT ON TIME?

A. I'M NOT GOING TO GO SO FAR AS TO TELL YOU THAT SOME
MASTER BLUEPRINT IN THE SKY HAS BEEN FOLLOWED TO THE LAST
DETAIL. I COULDN'T PRETEND THAT TO YOU. I THINK, HOWEVER,
THAT THE PROCESS THAT HAD BEEN SET OUT, WHICH WAS AN
ATTEMPT TO GATHER IN A COMPLETE CROSS-SECTION OF VIEWS OF
PEOPLE IN THE AREA, HAS BEEN, AND IS BEING ACCOMPLISHED.
AND THE NEXT STEP WAS ALWAYS WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO AFTER
MAY WHEN THAT PROCESS WAS COMPLETED.

Q. IS JUNE 1 THE ONLY OPTION THAT IS BEING CONSIDERED?
IN VIEW OF THE ADMITTED DIFFICULTIES IN CONVENING GENEVA,

ARE THERE ANY ALTERNATIVES TO GENEVA FOR MOVING THIS THING ALONG?

A. I THINK THAT AT THIS POINT, OUR MAIN EFFORTS, AND ALL THE EFFORTS I KNOW ABOUT, ARE AIMED TOWARD THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

Q. WHAT CONSTITUTES "SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS"?

A. WELL, NOW, THAT ONE, IF YOU'RE ASKING ME, I SUGGEST YOU ASK THE PRESIDENT. HE USED THE PHRASE.

Q. WELL, WHAT DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT UNDERSTAND BY THIS?

A. WELL, I THINK WHEN THE PRESIDENT USED THE PHRASE LIKE "SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS," AND HE HAS A BRIEFING EVERY DAY AT THE WHITE HOUSE, THAT YOU OUGHT TO GO THERE FOR A DEFINITION OF THAT.

Q. TWO THINGS, FIRST OF ALL THE SCHEDULE FOR THE SECRETARY TODAY LISTED A MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR DINETZ AT 10:30. HE NEVER SHOWED UP, AND LATER WE WERE TOLD IT WAS UNCLASSIFIED

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CANCELLED. CAN YOU TELL US WHY IT WAS CANCELLED?

A. YES. THAT WAS AN ADMINISTRATIVE FOUL-UP ON OUR SIDE.

THE TIME WAS SET ASIDE FOR IT AND THE AMBASSADOR WAS NOT INFORMED.

Q. OVER THE WEEKEND, EGYPTIAN VICE-PRESIDENT MUBARAK, MADE A STATEMENT SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS AGREED TO A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK. CAN YOU COMMENT ON THAT?

A. WELL, LET ME BACK INTO IT BY SAYING, WE HAVE NOT TAKEN A POSITION ON ANY OF THE MAJOR ISSUES THAT HAVE TO BE RESOLVED, AND THOSE ISSUES WHICH WE HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY ARE: THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, THE NATURE OF PEACE, AND BOUNDARIES.

WE HAVE TAKEN NO POSITION ON HOW ANY OF THESE ISSUES SHOULD BE RESOLVED, AND WE HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY THAT IT IS UP TO THE PARTIES CONCERNED TO SETTLE THEM IN NEGOTIATION.

Q. SO YOU DENY THAT STATEMENT?

A. I AM, IN EFFECT, DENYING THAT STATEMENT. I'M TELLING YOU THAT WE DON'T HAVE A POSITION ON THAT ISSUE.

Q. CAN YOU FILL US IN ON ANY OF THE ARMS SALES THAT HAVE BEEN IN THE PAPERS THE LAST DAY OR TWO, THE AWACS, THE HAWKS?

A. YES. I'VE BEEN READING THOSE STORIES WITH GREAT INTEREST. I CANNOT GO INTO DETAILS ON THE NATURE OF THE SALES. WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DISCUSSION, AND THEY'LL BE GOING ON FOR SOME TWENTY DAYS STARTING LAST TUESDAY, I BELIEVE. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS THE SPECIFICS.
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I WOULD SIMPLY POINT OUT TO YOU THAT THE ENTIRE PACKAGE OF 2.7 BILLION DOLLARS REPRESENTS THE RESULT OF NEGOTIATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AGREEMENTS THAT ARE, IN SOME CASES, OVER A YEAR OLD; AND THAT ALL OF THEM ARE CARRY-FORWARDS FROM THE PRECEDING YEAR. BUT I REALLY CAN'T GO BEYOND THAT AS TO THE DETAIL ON THIS. I HAVE BEEN READING A NUMBER OF STORIES WITH GREAT INTEREST.

Q. ISN'T THE SAUDI SALE OF HAWKS A COMMERCIAL SALE WHICH DOES NOT REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL?

A. THE ENTIRE PACKAGE IS ONE THAT I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO SAY ANYTHING MORE ABOUT IT EXCEPT WHAT I SAID.

VANCE

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